

What is claimed is:

1. A method for selectively reproducing locally stored programming signals comprising, in combination, the steps of:
- storing a first set of separate programming segments at a client location,
 - at said client location, employing processing means to derive identification data from each of said first set of separate programming segments,
 - transmitting said identification data from said client location to a remote processing location,
 - at said remote processing location, comparing said identification data with a database containing identification information and associated content descriptions for each of a second set of programming segments to identify common program segments found in both said first and said second set of programming segments,
 - transmitting from said remote processing location to said client location selected ones of content descriptions stored in said database which describe said common program segments, and
 - at said client location, presenting said selected content descriptions to a user to facilitate the selective processing of said common program segments.
2. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein at least some of said programming signals are recorded musical performances.
3. The method set forth in claim 2 wherein at least some of said content descriptions specify one or more attributes of the corresponding recorded musical performance from the group of attributes consisting of the title, performer, composer, and date of the corresponding recorded musical performance.
4. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of storing said first set of programming signals comprises receiving and recording broadcasted programming signals.

1 5. The method set forth in claim 4 wherein said identification signals contained in said
2 database are derived from said broadcasted programming signals received at said remote
3 processing location concurrently with the reception and recording of said broadcast programming
4 signals at said client location, and said content descriptions transmitted to said client location
5 from said remote processing location are used at said client location to facilitate the selective
6 time-shifted reproduction of said broadcast programming signals.

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3 6. The method as set forth in 1 wherein said content descriptions transmitted from said
remote processing location to said client location include information specifying the beginning
and ending time of each of said common program segments.

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7 7. The method as set forth in claim 1 further including the steps of transmitting one or
more selected ones of said common program segments from said client location to said remote
processing location, and storing said selected common program segments at said remote
processing location for subsequent retrieval.

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7 8. The method as set forth in claim 1 further including the steps performed at said
remote processing location comprising:
 maintaining a stored library containing said second set of programming segments
at said remote processing location,
 accepting a retrieval request from said client location specifying one or more
6 particular ones of said common program segments, and
7 responding to said request by transmitting to said client location the content of said
8 one or more particular ones of said common program segments.

1 9. The method set forth in claim 8 further comprising the steps of uploading a copy of
2 a program segment stored locally at said client location to said remote processing location and

3 storing the uploaded copy ins said stored library for later retrieval from said remote processing
4 location.

1 10. The method set forth in claim 8 further including the steps of posting an entry in
2 an accounting file upon the transmittal of said identification data to said remote processing
3 location, subsequently transmitting a playback request identifying said client location and
4 identifying a requested program segment, and authorizing the transmittal of said requested
5 program segment if said accounting file contains data indicating that identification data for said
6 requested program segment was previously transmitted from said client location.

1 11. The method set forth in claim 10 further including the step of disabling the
2 playback of a local copy of an program segment when the remote playback of said program
3 segment is authorized at said remote processing location.

1 12. The method set forth in claim 10 further including the step of disabling the
2 transmittal of said requested program segment from said remote processing location when the
3 playback of the copy of said requested program segment locally stored at said client location is
4 enabled.

1 13. A method for selectively reproducing previously broadcast programming segments
2 comprising, in combination, the steps of:

3 employing a first broadcast receiver at a client location for capturing a broadcast
4 signal,

5 recording said broadcast signal in a local storage unit in a substantially continuous
6 manner as said signal is received at said client location;

7 processing said broadcast signal at said client location to extract brief segments
8 from the content of said broadcast signal,

9 utilizing a communications channel to transmit said brief segments from said client
10 location to a remote processing location;

11 comparing said segments received from said client location with a library of
12 previously recorded programs to identify particular programs which contain segments matching
13 the segments received from said client location, and
14 transmitting program guide data describing said particular programs to said client
15 location from said remote programming location

1 14. The method as set forth in claim 13 further including the steps of displaying said
2 program guide data for use at said client station to facilitate the selection and reproduction of
3 desired ones of said particular programs.

2 15. The method as set forth in claim 13 wherein said data identifying said particular
programs includes timing information specifying the beginning and ending time of each of said
particular programs.

16. The method as set forth in claim 15 wherein the steps of recording and processing
said broadcast signal at said client location are performed by a programmed personal computer.

17. The method as set forth in claim 16 wherein said communications channel is the
Internet.

2 18. The method as set forth in claim 13 further including steps, at said client location,
3 of processing said program guide data to display a listing of the available programs in said local
4 storage unit, and selectively processing said available programs in response to commands from a
user.

1 19. The method set forth in claim 18 wherein said step of processing said available
2 programs to selectively reproduce selected ones of said available programs.

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20. The method set forth in claim 19 wherein said step of processing said available programs further includes selectively erasing designated ones of said available programs.